



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Summary

About this Release

This study investigates factors affecting skill level occupational attainment of women compared to men using 1986 Census data. Explanations for occupational attainment can be divided into those which allege that occupation is the outcome of achieved characteristics (education and labour market experience, for example) and those which hold that it is strongly influenced by ascribed characteristics such as gender.

This study explores the application of hypotheses derived from status attainment and human capital theories (achieved characteristics) and discrimination, divided labour market theory, and the ideology of gender (ascribed characteristics) to the question of gender differences in skill level occupational attainment. It concludes that gender differences in occupational attainment are significant and are the product of sex differences in labour market endowments, as predicted by the theory of status attainment.

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